

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 ACDA-07 EURE-00 /078 W
-----132036Z 052967 /66

P R 131825Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4073
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION NATO
USNMR SHAPE
SECDEF WASHDC
USCINCEUR
CINCLANT
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION GENEVA
USDEL MBFR VIENNA

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MILITARY ADDRESSEES ALSO FOR POLADS

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, MNUC, MPOL, NATO, FR, PGOV
SUBJECT: GENERAL MERY ON FRENCH NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND POLICY

REF: USDAO PARIS 100825Z JUN '77 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: GENERAL MERY IN A RECENT SPEECH DES-

CRIBED FRENCH NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEVELOPMENTS INCLUDING
INTER ALIA CRUISE MISSILES, SATELLITES, AND EMPLOYMENT
POLICIES FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS BOTH IN AND OUT OF EUROPE.
END SUMMARY.

2. ON JUNE 10 THE FRENCH PRESS PUBLISHED EXCERPTS OF
A PREVIOUSLY CLASSIFIED SPEECH GIVEN BY GENERAL GUY
MERY, CHIEF OF THE JOINT STAFF, ON MARCH 21 AT THE
INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
(IHEDN). THE TEXT, TOGETHER WITH THE QUESTIONS AND
ANSWERS WHICH FOLLOWED, PROVIDED INSIGHTS INTO THE
FRENCH NUCLEAR DETERRENT (STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL),
EMPLOYMENT POLICY, AND FUTURE SYSTEMS. IN REF
THE DAO REPORTED ON THE SPEECH PRIOR TO PUBLICATION
OF THE EXCERPTS.

3. STRATEGIC NUCLEAR SYSTEMS. MERY IS QUOTED THAT
THE ESSENTIAL PROBLEM CONCERNING FRENCH STRATEGIC
ARMS IS NOT QUANTITY BUT QUALITY AND THE ADAPATION OF
TECHNOLOGICAL EVOLUTION. "THIS EFFORT IS PRACTICED
IN ALL DOMAINES, WHETHER MRVS, HARDENING OF DELIVERY
VEHICLES, NEW (SYSTEMS) SUCH AS THE CRUISE MISSILE
(NOW WITHIN OUR REACH), OR DEVELOPMENT OF OBSERVATION
AND GUIDANCE SATELLITES...."

4. IN AN ACCOMPANYING LE MONDE ARTICLE DEFENSE
CORRESPONDENT JACQUES ISNARD WROTE THAT MERY SKETCHED
THE LINES OF DECISIONS BY PRESIDENT GISCARD IN DECEM-
BER AND JANUARY TO MODERNIZE THE FRENCH DETERRENT.
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ISNARD SAID THAT THESE DECISIONS CALLED FOR PRODUC-
TION OF MRVS AND A SECOND GENERATION SSBN.

COMMENT: THAT THE SIXTH SSBN WOULD BE A SECOND
GENERATION WAS PREVIEWED IN THE NOVEMBER 1976 DEFENSE
BUDGET DEBATE. END COMMENT.

IN ADDITION ISNARD WROTE THAT THE DECISIONS
CALLED FOR DEVELOPMENT OF NEW SYSTEMS "SUCH AS" THE
CRUISE MISSILE AND OBSERVATION SATELLITE. ISNARD
CONTINUED THAT THE DEFENSE MINISTER THEN DECIDED TO
"ACCELERATE" R AND D ON A CRUISE MISSILE WITH A
NUCLEAR WARHEAD. ISNARD ADDED THAT IT WAS ALSO
DECIDED TO BEGIN RESEARCH AND "FABRICATION" OF AN
OBSERVATION AND A GUIDANCE SATELLITE, IN PREFERENCE TO
NAVIGATION OR TELECOMMUNICATION SATELLITES. THE
GUIDANCE SATELLITE "WILL PERMIT THE GUIDANCE OF A

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CRUISE MISSILE TRAJECTORY TO ITS TARGET."

COMMENT: WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY HEARD REPORTS THAT
CRUISE MISSILES WERE UNDER STUDY BY THE GOF. THIS IS
THE STRONGEST EVIDENCE TO DATE THAT A RESEARCH EFFORT
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IS UNDERWAY. END COMMENT.

5. NUCLEAR EMPLOYMENT. SPEAKING ON TACTICAL NUCLEAR

WEAPONS, MERY DIRECTLY LINKED THEIR EMPLOYMENT WITH THE STRATEGIC NUCLEAR "ANTI-CITY" FORCE." THE BRUTAL AND NUMEROUS EMPLOYMENT OF TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS MUST HAVE ABOVE ALL A POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE." THUS "MILITARY EFFICIENCY IN SECONDARY TO THE MANIFESTATION OF OUR POLITICAL WILL TO FOREWARN THE ADVERSARY THAT THE FIRING OF TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS INDICATES THAT THE COMBAT HAS JUST CHANGED CHARACTER AND THAT THE NEXT STEP COULD BE STRATEGIC RELEASE."

6. RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS MERY REJECTED "MININUKES" FOR THE FRENCH. HE DENIED ANY AUTOMATICITY BETWEEN THE COURSE OF THE BATTLE AND THE NUCLEAR RELEASE DECISION WHICH IS EXCLUSIVELY RESERVED TO THE PRESIDENT. MERY CONTINUED THAT TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF UNIT EQUIPMENT. "THERE CAN BE NO QUESTION THAT THE FIRST ARMY WOULD MOVE WITHOUT THESE SYSTEMS..."

7. MERY ADDED THAT ONE CAN ENVISAGE SCENARIOS VARYING FROM DIRECT PARTICIPATION IN THE FORWARD BATTLE TO ISOLATED COMBAT ON THE FRONTIERS. "IT WILL DEPEND ON THE CIRCUMSTANCE."

8. REFERRING TO TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPON EMPLOYMENT OUTSIDE EUROPE, MERY STATES THAT...USE AT SEA IS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST "WHERE THESE WEAPONS LOSE THEIR APOCALYPTIC CHARACTER." EMPLOYMENT IN SEAS BORDERING EUROPE WOULD BE LINKED TO STRATEGIC EMPLOYMENT AS IS THE CASE IN EUROPE ITSELF. IN A DISTANT THEATER "SUCH AS THE INDIAN OCEAN" THIS COULD CONCERN "TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPON EMPLOYMENT IN AVOIDING RELEASE OF THE STRATEGIC FORCES IN DIVERSE TYPES OF ACTION INVOLVING

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INTIMIDATION OR RETALIATION." IN REGARD TO MARITIME EMPLOYMENT MERY RECALLED THAT TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS WILL BE ISSUED TO THE FRENCH NAVY WITH THE SUPER-ETENDARD AIRCRAFT WHICH WILL BE DEPLOYED ON CARRIERS.

9. GENERAL COMMENT: AS WITH HIS SPEECH LAST YEAR, MERY'S 1977 ADDRESS WILL PROVOKE DISCUSSION AND DEBATE. THIS WILL BE MORE ACUTE AS THE LEFT COALITION IS CURRENTLY TRYING TO GRAPPLE WITH THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS ISSUE. THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY RECENTLY REVERSED ITS TRADITIONAL OPPOSITION TO THE FRENCH NUCLEAR FORCE. THE SOCIALIST PARTY HAS YET TO ALTER OFFICIALLY ITS 1972 COMMON PROGRAM POSITION AGAINST THE FORCE. SO THE MERY SPEECH, IN ADDITION TO THE STRATEGIC SENSITIVITIES INVOKED, ADDS SPICE TO THE POLITICAL MANEUVER-

ERING PRIOR TO THE 1978 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. MERY
HAS RAISED SOME CONTENTIOUS ISSUES WHICH THE LEFT
MAY FIND DIFFICULT TO ADDRESS. IN EFFECT
HIS SPEECH SETS THE STAGE FOR ASKING THE UNION OF THE
LEFT: SO YOU ACCEPT NUCLEAR WEAPONS--WHAT ARE YOUR
PLANS FOR THE FORCE AND ITS EMPLOYMENT?
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Message Attributes

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